11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

657 owns his own farm and after it is broken for him, works it individually
425 without having any interest in the work or produce of any of the adjoining
243 farms.....[124] Out of the proceeds of the crop each Indian paid back to the
[407] trust fund all advances that had been made him including cost of breaking
[452] land, seed, fencing, granaries."[125]

Returns were immediate and large. Chief Running Antelope, who bought
243 out one of the other Indians[126] while the crop was growing and thus har-
434 vested eighty acres, had a cash balance of $1309.42 after paying all debts
and advances. Emile Bull Shield came next with a net balance of $1203.59.
[425] Tallow took third place with clear profits of $1200.81.[127] By the end of the
decade, many a young farmer was better off than the old established cattle
herders.

434 The following table shows the amazing increase in income during this
178 decade of greatest participation:[128]

	1911	1914	1919	1920
Farm products, including hay	$29,645	$24,000	$99,575	$110,000
Beef	11,549	14,348	60,000	80,929
Wages	13,432	17,751	35,000	50,000
Miscellaneous	2,124	5,001	39,171	34,403
Total income	$56,750	$61,100	$233,746	$254,332

464 In 1919, there were 4000 cattle (a substantial decrease from the figures
433 of 1906) and 3600 horses on the reserve; 2800 acres were sown, almost
[231] entirely in wheat, and 10,000 tons of hay were cut.[129] Due to World War I,
[458] all commodity prices were inflated and the returns from beef and farm
products multiplied four times in as many years. Everyone prospered. Even
the single men without herds or land had no difficulty in finding a job.

465 Sometimes a worker might be given a small share of the crop, sometimes
464 he might receive cash wages, but most frequently the remuneration offered
by former herder or new farmer was not unlike that of the buffalo days.
Says Pointed Plume,

> In the years I was building my herd and farming I hired Bob Sharp Cutter to help me. He was the son of my father's brother, Sharp Cutter. He was much younger

---

[124] *Idem.*

[125] 1910, Vol. 17, p. 174.

[126] Once assigned, land could be "sold" or "rented" by one Blood to another.
[427] Leases to whites were made only with the permission of the Agency and the native Council of Chiefs.

[127] 1910, Vol. 17, p. 174.

[128] 1911, Vol. 19, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 24; 1914, Vol. 23, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 1; 1919, Vol. 9, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 68; 1920, Vol. 8, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 76.

[129] 1919, Vol. 9, No. 27, p. 36.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

than I. When he came, he was still single, but he remained with me for several years after his marriage. He lived in the same house with me. He received no regular pay, but he was given board and lodging. Sometimes I made him a gift. In the fall I would take him to the dry goods store and fit him out. After his marriage, I boarded his wife as well. Besides this, he kept $4.00 out of each $8.00 I paid for hauling the grain to the elevator. There were about thirty hauls.

Says Ned Sloane,

Spotted Tail, my father-in-law's brother's son worked for me three summers and winters. He was single and lived in my house. He received no regular wage, but besides his board and lodging, I gave him a horse at the end of each year, a complete riding outfit, some clothes, and a small cash bonus every so often. When he married he left me, but his brother who was still single took his place and worked for me for two years.

Shamanism appealed only to the old who were still willing to purchase medicine with horses and validate it with dreams. The herders continued to build up their position as they had in the past. They bought medicine bundles; they joined societies; they honored their sons and daughters with lavish payments in both horses and goods for ceremonial privileges. The new rich spent their money on seeds, implements, barns, and wagons. Unwilling to accumulate more than the few horses necessary to their daily tasks, these fortunate farmers felt no urge to enhance their prestige by ceremonial purchase. But they did have favorites "the American way." They honored their children with extravagant outfits, a fine saddle horse, a fine saddle. While they spent their money differently from the horse owners, they were just as eager to set their sons and daughters apart from the sons and daughters of the poorer families as were the owners of the large herds.

SUMMARY.—During this decade income spread was greatest and Blood prosperity at its peak. With few exceptions, the new farming program received its strongest support from those individuals who had the smallest stake in their society. Quick rewards soon set them on a par with the successful herders, but lacking a surplus of horses, they did not validate their position in the customary manner. For the first time in the history of the Blood, a money economy, entirely divorced from the traditional horse economy, flourished exuberantly and with success in this competitive society.

1920–1940

FROST AND DEPRESSION.—At the end of this golden decade, two catastrophes befell the Blood. The post-war depression caused a sudden drop in commodity prices. Both farmers and herders suffered. But prior to this, the harsh winters of 1919 and 1920 had created a much more fundamental

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

fifth the number the Blood had boasted in their herding heyday.[143] The income from beef products, if not impressive, remained stable: since 1922, it has varied only within a few thousand dollars. Wheat, however, the mainstay of Blood economy, fluctuated seriously in the post-war period and again with the depressed markets of the early thirties and the extreme droughts that followed. From 1930 to 1932, the number of acres cultivated decreased 50 per cent; farm income dropped from the substantial level of $100,000[144] to a miserable $24,000;[145] and "the seasons of 1934–5–6 were in many ways the most discouraging to Indian farmers."[146] Many of them joined the herders on the relief rolls of the agency.

Not unlike the situation in our own West, land was being concentrated in the hands of the few. In 1939, Jim Belly Fat farmed 600 acres—income, $9000; Pointed Plume and his son George farmed 300 acres—income, $3000; another son, Harry farmed 100 acres—income $960.[147] From the first figure there was still deductible support for a sick brother's family and compensation for a helper, but the last two may be accepted as net.

The situation is beginning to tell and tensions over land are growing. The small acreages cultivated in the first years of the reserve did not vitally affect the general economy. The none too productive farms remained little more than homesteads. Nor did the substantial allotments of wheat lands in 1910 create any land shortage; all requests could be satisfied, and in the years that followed, the on-coming generation could also get land for the asking. Wissler, discussing the distribution of property at death, observes, "The older sons usually take the bulk, but must make some concessions to all concerned."[148] So little was land a problem in the early years of wheat farming that a system of ultimogeniture found acceptance:[149] it was customary to permit the youngest son, if he had helped farm his father's land, to inherit it in entirety, on the assumption that the older children had already been well taken care of. Today such expectancy is frequently unfulfilled.

---

[143] 1930, Pt. 2, p. 64.

[144] Ibid., p. 72.

[145] 1932, Pt. 2, p. 42. Total income dropped from $150,000 to $62,000.

[146] 1937, p. 23.

[147] He had already "borrowed" 50 acres more to work the following year.

[148] Wissler, *Social Life*, p. 26. Informants stated that in wealthy families mature sons were provided with horses and later with cattle. Yet at the time of the final distribution serious disputes arose between grown siblings over the disposition of the remainder share. If the children were minors, the property usually went to the dead man's brothers who were obviously then expected to look after them.

[149] Ultimogeniture, it would seem, can only operate in an agricultural society when there is no scarcity of cultivatable land. As land shortages developed, a number of European countries changed within historic time from a system of ultimo- to primogeniture.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

657 A drought cycle began in 1917 and continued for four years.[123]
433 The end of the war, in 1919, resulted in the loss of markets. The
[731] drought and falling prices brought bankruptcy to both cattlemen and
[458] farmers in this part of Montana by 1919 and 1920. Veterans returned to
[464] swell the labor force. The Blackfeet shared in this change. The white homesteaders and cattlemen could abandon their places and go elsewhere; the Indian could not and had to rely again upon the government.[124] The Indian, however, did have the Agency to turn to, an advantage not shared by the white man. During the winter of 1920-1921 rations were issued to "over 2,000, or about two-thirds of the entire population."[125] Several informants reported that their families and friends were ruined at this
[461] time. A few were able to make a comeback, but many abandoned their ranches and did not try again.

657 In 1919, a second allotment of reservation lands was authorized
425 in the annual appropriation bill for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[126] After this no further allotments in severalty were made to the Blackfeet Indians.

433 The Blackfeet generally were again dependent. Thirty-five years
461 of attempted economic readaptation were behind them. They had tried
[233] farming and found it unrewarding. They had found satisfaction in stock raising, but only a few were able to succeed at this in the face of cold

---

[123] Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, op. cit., 1921, p. 55; Daniel W. Whetstone, Frontier Editor (New York: Hastings House Publishers, Inc., 1956), pp. 145-146.

[124] Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, op. cit., 1921, p. 56.

[125] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1922, p. 12

[126] U.S., Statutes at Large, 1919, XLI, pp. 16-17.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

433 winters, periods of drought, and the fluctuating markets regulated by
[461] national and international conditions. Large numbers of younger men
[233] had been employed in seasonal labor, railway and irrigation construction
[464] work, harvesting and ranch labor and had served in the armed forces.
These jobs provided some cash income but no training for long-range
[427] adaptation. Unused allotments were leased to others to provide another
small cash return to the Indian owner. Many people depended entirely
upon the rations issued and the cash that could be earned by wage work
or leasing of land.

179 Periodic crop failures and price fluctuations made it difficult
461 for the Indian to understand or to develop faith in long-range plans.
Each government program offered future rewards and security, but the
promised rewards never materialized; the only tangible things were cash,
rations and relief. The white man's values of thrift and hard work had
been developed and maintained by a better than average experience of
success; few Blackfeet, by 1920, had experienced enough consistent
reward to become imbued with these values. Every ten years or so their
best efforts had resulted in failure.

1920-1935

433 The next fifteen years were in many ways a repetition of the
past, and reinforced more than they changed the expectation patterns.
[458] Montana farmers, generally, experienced a severe depression during this
[731] time[127] and this was capped by the national depression and the droughts
of the Dust Bowl years that began in 1929 and 1930.[128]

---

[127] The Montana Almanac, op. cit., p. 122.

[128] Ross K. Toole, Montana: An Uncommon Land (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 240.

[1884-1960]

433 [434] [464] [458] [315] [657] increased the need for additional capital, but funds were not available to meet the demand. Periods of declining employment, i.e., the recession of 1957-59, cut into individual earnings from wage labor. No proven oil fields had been tapped and interest in oil exploration decreased. When individual and tribal earnings fell off, the demand on welfare funds increased. The Council contributed the greatest share to the county welfare program, so the relief the people received was yet another drain upon tribal income.

643 184 Tribal self-government suffered under these pressures. It was difficult to get a majority of the tribe to support any political or economic measure. The Council, itself split on issues, despaired of tribal unity:

643 652 434 184

> Members of the Blackfeet Tribe are generally very poor. Their income is meager and consists mostly of income from leased trust land, casual labor, and participation in Tribal programs operated with Tribal income. It is very difficult to convince these people that Tribal income should be assigned for any purpose. Most of our people see only the spectre of having their income, and consequently Tribal programs and their direct benefits, diverted into programs designed for only more progressive members of the Tribe. To these people, it is a matter of personal survival. Any possible reduction in Tribal income to them automatically means a reduction in personal income.
>
> . . .until at least thirty per cent of the adult population of the Tribe becomes self-supporting and thus able to plan and to think in terms of the future, it appears that programs requiring popular approval for use of locally supervised Tribal funds will certainly be limited to those programs which meet the daily emergency needs of members of the Blackfeet Tribe.[165]

---

[121] [165] Letter from the Secretary of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 3, 1960, unpublished documents of the Blackfeet Tribal Council.

vation and before the establishment of a business committee, it became a central issue in his campaign to secure more authority for the tribe over its own future. Objections to the permit system also gained Hamilton support from both full bloods and mixed bloods. The permit system established a fee of $1.00 a head for a fixed number of cattle to range without restriction on the Blackfoot Reservation. For the Blackfeet the government imposed the same fee for number of cattle in excess of one hundred head. Mixed bloods with large cattle herds protested paying any fee. Full bloods were equally resentful since the fee restricted their ability to trade cattle for horses. What the government had viewed as an insidious process of monopolization was viewed quite differently by the Blackfeet. Full bloods took little umbrage with their mixed blood relatives' penchant for acquiring cattle so long as it allowed them to continue a life-style they cherished above the ownership of beef cattle. Hamilton understood the full blood's attachment to an older pace of life and resented the government's interference (NA, 1902b, 1904a, 1904b; 1904c).

With little ability to monitor the system, the government program had little practical effect. Full bloods and mixed bloods simply evaded the regulations. Later, in 1908, the Office of Indian Affairs modified the permit system charging a fee to the Blackfeet only for cattle that were not part of the government's distribution program. Cattle carrying the Interior Department ID brand were not charged, while "straight" cattle were charged a fee for any number. The new program encouraged Blackfeet with large herds to brand all of their cattle with the ID brand, thus escaping the fee. Branding cattle with the ID brand, however, also reduced their ability to sell the cattle since ID cattle could be sold only with the agent's permission (FRC, 1908).

Hamilton had little difficulty organizing general resistance to the government's program and in uniting mixed bloods and full bloods in the effort. By 1915, the general evasion of the program forced the government to return to a leasing system. With World War I already in progress in Europe the market price for cattle increased, and

the return of drought reduced the Blackfeet cattle industry to only a few thousand head. Pressure by the cattle owners on agents to approve cattle sales proved irresistable when prices went over $15.00 a hundredweight. Inevitably, the first to sell their cattle were the full bloods (NA, 1915a, 1915b, 1915c).

To meet the situation the government changed the cattle program once again. In 1915, with a modest beginning, the Office of Indian Affairs established a tribal cattle herd as a means of teaching the full bloods the skills of cattle raising and to provide them with a market for their hay. The program was no more successful than earlier efforts in agricultural training. Mixed-blood cattlemen protested that tribal resources were denied them because the tribal herd used the best grazing land. They demanded that the government distribute the herd on a per capita basis. Such a program nearly ensured that the cattle would ultimately become property of a few mixed bloods. Drought and the break in cattle prices after World War I ended the debate. By 1920 the government had sold the herd to reduce costs and the Blackfeet found themselves in their worst economic distress since the 1880s (NA, 1916a, 1919a, 1919b, 1920b).

The destruction of the Blackfoot cattle industry during the war and postwar years, coupled with the end of Blackfoot funds from earlier land sales, left most of the tribe destitute. Few had improved their allotments sufficiently to farm, and fewer had the resources to reestablish themselves in the cattle business. At its lowest point in forty years and a decade away from a time when income from mineral resources would partially alleviate conditions on the reservation, Fred C. Campbell arrived as the new superintendent. In Campbell, Hamilton faced his greatest challenge for tribal leadership (Wessel, 1979).

Campbell was an ambitious, imposing figure, who put his personal stamp on the reservation in the first months of his administration. He quickly gained an understanding of the reservation's problems. With the limited resources of the reservation, Campbell decided to concentrate building a subsistence level under the most destitute mem-